

A Statement and Clarification *Of AL-SALAFIYYAH:* CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

Being a statement and a clarification made by a group of
seekers of knowledge under caption: Bayân wa tawdîh
hawl ba'd mâ yajrî fî sâhat al-da'wah fî al-Kuwait,
together with a letter of endorsement by his Eminence

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz

Translated from the original Arabic by

Dr. Muhammad Mohar Ali

Jam'iat Ihya' Minhaaj Al-Sunnah

A Statement and Clarification Of AL-SALAFIYYAH

CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful

Translated from the original Arabic by

Dr. Muhammad Matar Ali

(Formerly Professor of the History of Islam, Madinah Islamic
University, Madinah, and Imam Muhammad Islamic University,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

Jam'at Inayat Michael Al-Sunnah

A Statement and Clarification Of AL-SALAFIYYAH:

CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

(Being a statement and a clarification made by a group of seekers of knowledge under caption: *Bayân wa tawdîh hawl ba'd mâ yajrî fî sâhat al-da'wah fî al-Kuwait*, together with a letter of endorsement by his Eminence

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz)

Translated from the original Arabic by

Dr. Muhammad Mohar Ali

(Formerly Professor of the History of Islam, Madina Islamic University, Madina, and Imam Muhammad Islamic University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)

Jam'iat Ihya' Minhaaj Al-Sunnah

A Statement and Clarification of Al-Salafiyyah Concept and Principles
First edition: Rabi' al-Thani 1421/August 2000

Published by Jam'iat 'Ihyaa' Minhaj al-Sunnah

P.O. Box 24, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 8ED

Tel. & Fax :+44 (0)1473 251578

E-mail: mail@jimas.org

Web: <http://www.jimas.org>

© Copyright 2000 by Jam'iat 'Ihyaa' Minhaj al-Sunnah.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any language, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the express permission of the copyright owner.

Printed by De-Luxe Printers, 245-A Acton Lane, Park Royal, London, N.W. 10 7NR

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Letter of His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Baz</i>	4
<i>Preface to the Second Impression</i>	7
<i>A STATEMENT AND A CLARIFICATION</i>	9
(1) The Concept of <i>Salafiyyah</i>	11
(2) Bidding the Approved and Forbidding the Disapproved (<i>Al-'amr bi al-ma'rûf wa al-nahyî 'an al-munkar</i>)	16
(3) Attitude in respect of the Muslim Ruler	18
(4) <i>Jihâd</i> in the way of Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious	20
(5) The Etiquette of Disagreeing	22
(6) Lawful Abandonment	25
(7) <i>Da'wah</i> and the State of the ' <i>Ummah</i>	28
(8) Respect for the Honour of A Muslim	31
(9) Honouring the ' <i>Ulamâ</i> ' (Scholars)	35
(10) The Manner of Seeking Knowledge	36
<i>Signatories to the Statement</i>	38

Introduction

The last ten years has witnessed a great tribulation (*fitnah*) between the ranks of '*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*. Indeed as Shaikh Bakr Abu Zaid has remarked, such a tribulation and division is unheard of in the annals of history.

While initially a local affair in one part of the world, this tribulation soon spread like wildfire to reach all corners of the earth.

The true upholder of the *Salafi* message (*ad-da'wah as-Salafiyyah*) attempted to defend the *da'wah* from this insidious onslaught by whatever means they had at their disposal.

It might be said that the Kuwaitis (may Allah reward them) were among the foremost in defending the *da'wah*. Their defence was epitomized with the following declaration constructed and signed by thirty two professors of *Shari'ah*, *imâms* and *khatîbs*.

It was furthermore, as the reader will see, approved and praised by the *imam* of the '*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* of our age, his eminence Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz (may Allah be merciful to him).

The reader will find in this declaration, among other matters, a concise statement of the *Salafi da'wah* regarding:

- Tawhid
- Ruling by secular law

- Commanding and forbidding evil
- *Jihâd*
- Forsaking the heretic (*Hajr al-mubtadi'*)
- Knowledge of current affairs (*Fiqh al-Waqi'*)
- Entering into parliament with the aim of social reform
- Working with non-*Salaḥi* movements
- Categorizing people
- Seeking knowledge

It is hoped in Allah that the unbiased true seeker of knowledge will find in this brief declaration all the answers for those pressing issues.

Some ignorant people in the UK have cast suspicions on Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz's approval of this declaration, labelling it a forgery. To these simple minded people we say the documents issued by Shaikh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz are all public documents having a date and a reference number. It would have been, and still is, easy to prove it a forgery if that is the case. However, as they are liars – and they know themselves to be – they are content with practising a form of intellectual terrorism through their keen skills in casting doubts through their well known forms of artifices.

If the reader still remains unsure or confused, we suggest to him or her the following advice. Namely to sincerely invoke Allah

with the following prayer of the Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

“O Allah, Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil, the originator of the heavens and the earth. Knower of the unseen and apparent. You judge between Your servants in that which they differ. Guide me in that which I differ about from the Truth, by your permission. Indeed You guide whomsoever You please to a straight way.” (Narrated by *Muslim*)

We are certain that those who are sincere and strive to seek the truth will return to the truth. And with Allah all assistance is sought.

Jam'iat 'Ihyaa' Minhaaj al-Sunnah

Rabî' al-Thânî 1421/August 2000

Letter of His Eminence

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Baz

From 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz to the noble brethren, Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hâjrî, Shaykh 'Abd al-Hâdî ibn Hamd al-Murrî, Shaykh Bassâm al-Shattî, Shaykh Riyâd ibn Mansûr al-Khalîfî and the rest of the brethren to the last of them, Shaykh Hâyi ibn Sâlim al-Hây. May Allah guide them to what is pleasing to Allah and increase them in knowledge and faith, and give victory to the truth through them. *'Âmîn*.

Assalamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu:

I have gone through the statement issued by you under the caption: "A Declaration and clarification regarding some of what is going on in the field of *da'wah* in Kuwait" and have come to know what it contains of quotations from Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *'Allâma* Ibn al-Qayyim, Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn Hasan and others of the men of knowledge. I found these useful quotations made in their appropriate contexts. Similar is what you added of good words. All these are in their proper places in explaining the *salafî 'aqidah*, which is to follow the Qur'ân and the authentic *sunnah*, regarding which the predecessor of the *'ummah* are unanimous, together with taking caution against what is opposed to that and explaining the nature of the duty of enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved, the lawful

attitude to the Muslim ruler, the etiquette of calling to Allah, *Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ*, showing respect to the *'ulamâ'*, warning against unjustly attacking them, clarifying the rules regarding abandonment together with other details that you have set forth in the statement of yours under reference concerning the rules of *shari'ah* and the approved etiquette towards the *'ulamâ'*, the manners in which the *da'wah* work should be conducted, pointing out that the mistake of a scholar of the *'Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah* in some matters does not justify vilification of him, but it is a duty to give him sincere advice; for the object of the men of learning of the *'Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* is to clarify the truth. A scholar might exercise *ijtihâd* and might commit a mistake in that; but he will be forgiven and rewarded for his endeavour in the matter of what Allah has ordained of mutual advice and cooperation in piety and righteousness, of counselling with truth and forbearance. On this depends the solution of all problems, the continuation of the purity of hearts, the enagement of the enemies and baffling them to cause dissension and hatred among the Muslims.

May Allah give you good reward and bless you, render your statement beneficial, make us and you all firm on guidance and protect us, you and all the Muslims from the beguileness of dissension and the instigations of Satan. He is the Generous, the Kind.

Waassalamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.

Muftî-General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President, Council of Prominent '*Ulamâ*' and the Department of Academic Research and '*Iftâ*'

Preface to the Second Impression

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all beings; and peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.

A group of seekers of knowledge whose signatures appear below issued a statement clarifying some of the intellectual principles around which differences of opinion had developed in Kuwait. After the publication of this statement some persons raised doubts about it. So we thought it right to send a copy of the statement to His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz, *Muftî-General* of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President of the Council of Prominent '*Ulamâ*' and the Department of Academic Researches and '*Iftâ*', by way of reference to those who have knowledge and judgement. And His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azîz ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Bâz is a personality about whose scholarship, erudition, piety, integrity, concern for Islam and the Muslim and *jihâd* for holding aloft in the world the word of the Lord of all beings all agree and testify, whether friend or foe or the generality of the Muslims.

His Eminence has been pleased to give a reply to our letter endorsing and supporting our views and emphasizing the intellectual principles embodied in the statement and as recommendation for the signatories to it.

We are happy to bring out this second impression of the statement including the letter of His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd al-

‘Azîz ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Bâz. We pray to Allah that it may put an end to the differences and bring about unity of all the brethren on a common formula. And we ask Allah for guidance and propriety.

And the last word of us is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all beings.

12 Jamâdî al-’Ûlâ 1415 H.

(16 Nov. 1994)

‘Abd Allah al-Haqqân

Ahmad Sabâh

‘Âdil al-Damkhî

Walîd al-Tabatabâ’î

A STATEMENT AND A CLARIFICATION

All praise belongs to Allah, and peace and blessings be on the noblest of the Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions.

In pursuance of the saying of Allah:

“You are the best nation raised for mankind enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved and believing in Allah.” (’Âl ‘Imrân, 110);

and the saying of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be on him:

“The *dîn* is the giving of sincere advice. We said: For whose sake, O Messenger of Allah? He said: For Allah, His book, His Messenger and the leaders of the Muslims in general.” (Narrated by *Muslim*);

And after having observed what the field of *da’wah* in Kuwait is witnessing of the phenomenon of ideological storm to which the youth and those who are turning to the path of repentance and guidance are being drawn, so that they become victims of intellectual confusion and are converted into tools and instruments for destroying all that the *da’wah* workers have accomplished of the projects of preaching and charity and for demolishing all the aspects of reform in the country by waylaying them, reviling them and rejoicing at their pitfalls;

And having noticed that this phenomenon has crossed all reasonable limits, started shrinking the shade of the *dīn*, caused dissension in the community and has planted mutual enmity and hatred amongst them;

And having seen that the agitators of this confusion are trying to establish and disseminate their ideas by means of lessons and recorded lectures distributed to the elite and the generality, and by giving them out as the cardinal principles of the *salafī da'wah*, while turning blind to the vicious onslaughts sweeping through the lands of Islam, spreading the poison of unbelief and apostasy and throwing the gates wide open for mischief and depravity;

And having in mind that Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious, has taken a covenant from those who know the truth to clarify it to all men, as of a bounden duty, and not to conceal it;

The undersigned brothers have thought it necessary to put on record in this statement what they consider to be the lawful and correct attitude in respect of these ideas, in discharge of the trust and responsibility on behalf of the *'ummah*. Allah is the Giver of Success and He is the Sufficient and Best as our Guardian-Protector.

We summarize our position in the following principles:

(1) The Concept of *Salafiyyah*

Salafiyyah is based on some general and intellectual principles derived from well-preserved sources – the Qur'ân, *Sunnah* and Consensus (*'Ijmâ'*). These principles govern the method of acquiring the *dīn* and understanding the Qur'ân and *Sunnah* according to the principles agreed upon by the righteous predecessors (*Salaf*).

Whoever abides by these principles is a *Salafī* and he belongs to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*; and he is on the way of the righteous predecessors.

Calling to adhere to these principles and rules and rallying the *'ummah* round these, together with clarifying the falsity and invalidity of everything else of the sources of innovation (*bid'ah*) and error is a duty and obligation imposed upon *da'wah* workers. It is the way for the salvation of the *'ummah* and its exit from its trial.

The basis of these principles and the first and foremost of these duties is *tawhîd* or monotheism in respect of Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious. As Allah, *Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ*, says:

“I have created man and *jinn* for naught but that they worship Me.” (*Sûrat al-Dhâriyât*, 56);

and as stated in an authentic *hadîth* : **“So let the first thing you call men to be that they practise monotheism in respect of Allah.”** (Reported by *Bukhârî*).

And this, the practising of monotheism, is realized by:

- (a) By believing in the Oneness of Allah as Lord (*Rubûbiyyah*) and His Exclusiveness in respect of Dominion and Sovereignty, creation, management and regulation;
- (b) Believing in His Oneness and Exclusiveness for being worshipped, and making all types of worship and prayer only and exclusively to Him;
- (c) Believing in the Uniqueness and Exclusiveness of His Names and Attributes; and describing Him as He describes Himself and as His Messenger, peace and blessings be on him, described Him, without comparison, suspension (*ta'tîl*), modification (*takyîf*), distortion (*tahrîf*) or interpretation (*ta'wîl*) or stultification (*tajhîl*);
- (d) Believing in the truth and reality of all that He has informed us, in general where He has informed in general terms, and in details wherever He has informed us in details.
- (e) And singling out Allah as the Only and Sole Sovereign and Judge (*al-Hâkimiyyah*) and placing His judgement and that of His Messenger, and obedience to Allah and to His Messenger, above the obedience to and judgement of anyone else. There is no way out of it for anyone. Allah says: **"The decreeing (or judgement) (*hukm*) is for none but Allah"** (*Sûrat Yûsuf*, 40). Allah also says: **"And He does not share with anyone in His decreeing (or government)."** (*Sûrat al-Kahf*, 26). Allah further says:

"But no, by your Lord, they believe not unless they make you judge about whatever crops up between them..." (*Sûrat al-Nisâ'*, 65).

'*Allâma* Muhammad ibn Ibrâhîm 'Âl al-Shaykh, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says in his *Tahkîm al-Qawânîn* (Judging by the Law):

"To judge by the *shari'ah* (Islamic law) to the exclusion of everything else is the twin half of worshipping Allah Alone to the exclusion of everyone else."

And '*Allama* Shanqîti, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

"Setting partners with Allah in the matter of His judgement and ruling and setting partners with Allah in the matter of worship, both mean the same thing; there is no difference between the two. So he who follows a system of law other than the system of Allah's law and a legislation other than Allah's legislation, and he who worships an idol and prostrates himself before an icon have surely no difference between them; they are one and the same. Both of them are polytheists, setting partners with Allah." (*Adwâ' al-Bayân*, Vol. 7, p. 162).

The most obvious implication of these principles is also that obedience to Allah and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, should be in accordance with what the

predecessors of this 'ummah understood it about Allah and His Messenger, peace be on him. Allah says:

“And whoever turns hostile to the Messenger, after the guidance has become clear to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We shall assign him to what he has undertaken and shall broil him in hell; and evil it shall be as a destination.” (*Sûrat al-Nisâ*, 115).

And Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious says:

“The foremost and the first ones of the emigrants and the helpers and those who followed them in righteousness, Allah is pleased with them and they were content with Him.” (*Sûrat al-Tawbah*, 100)

Thus Allah has made it a condition to follow them in righteousness for the realization of His promise of Pleasure towards them. And the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, says: **“The best of men are my generation, then those who come next to them, then those who come next to them.”** (Agreed upon by *Bukhârî and Muslim*). Also, it is the consensus of the leading scholars of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* that it is a bounden duty to follow the predecessors of this 'ummah (*salaf*), in all that concerns the *dîn*, 'aqidah (faith), *shari'ah* (law), 'ibadah (worship), *sulûk* (conduct) and 'akhlâq (character); and that whatever the predecessors of this 'ummah (*salaf*) were not cognizant of, that cannot be part of the *dîn*, be it matters of faith, or of worship or of conduct. And the best of what

has been written in clarification of the principles of the *'Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* are the works of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, particularly his *Al-'Aqîdat al-Wâsitiyyah*, and the works of the *Imâm* and *Mujaddid* (reviver or renewer of Islam) Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhâb, may Allah bestow His mercy on them.

(2) Bidding the Approved

and

Forbidding the Disapproved

(*Al-'amr bi al-ma'rûf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*)

One of the great principles of this straight religion is to enjoin the approved and to forbid the disapproved; as Allah says:

“You are the best nation raised for mankind enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved and believing in Allah.” (*Sûrat 'Âl 'Imrân*, 110)

And an authentic *hadîth* says: **“Whoever of you sees something disapproved (*munkar*) he should change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then by his tongue [i. e., he should disapprove and denounce it]; if unable to do so, then by his heart [i. e., he should then detest and avoid it]; and that is the weakest form of *'imân*.”** (Reported by *Muslim*).

In practising this principle, however, its conditions and rules should be observed. These are knowledge, forbearance, courtesy and patience, irrespective of whether the disapproved thing is an innovation (*bid'ah*) or it is a sin (*ma'siyah*). As Allah says:

“And make the call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation; and argue with them in ways that are better.” (*Sûrat al-Nahl*, 125).

Also, regard should be had to benefits and harms (arising out of the act of enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved). Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“In cases where the harms arising out of enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved are greater, they cannot be within the purview of what Allah and His Messenger have commanded, even if this means abandoning a duty or doing a deed forbidden; for it is on the believer to fear Allah in respect of His servants and not his duty to bring them to guidance.” (*Qâ'idah fî al-'amr bi al-ma'rûf*, p. 17).

(3) Attitude in respect of the Muslim Ruler

Another great principle is to obey the Muslim persons in authority. Allah says:

“And obey Allah and obey His Messenger and those in authority from amongst you.” (*Sûrat al-Nisâ*, 59).

So obedience is due to them in so far as they obey Allah and His Messenger. It is stated in a *hadîth*: **“No obedience is due to a creature in disobedience to the Creator.”** (Reported by *Ahmad* and *al-Hâkim*) Also in this respect is the *hadîth*: **“Obedience is but due in matters approved.”** (Agreed upon by *Bukhârî* and *Muslim*).

And it is a duty to give them (i. e., persons in authority), with knowledge and wisdom, sincere advice and to enjoin on them the doing of approved things and to forbid them from the doing of disapproved things; for the welfare of peoples and countries cannot be achieved except through unity, obedience, enjoining the approved and forbidding the disapproved. It is stated in a *hadîth*: **“The best of *jihâd* is to speak out the truth to the tyrannical ruler.”** (Reported by *Ahmad* and *Ibn Mâjah*)

And it is forbidden to go out in revolt against them. It is stated in a *hadîth*: **“And that we should not attempt to wrest authority from those who legally possess it. He (the Prophet) said: Except if you see stark infidelity about which you have clear proof from Allah.”** And in another *hadîth* it is stated: “It was said: “O Messenger of Allah, shall we not fight them with

swords? He said: No, as long as they continue holding prayer amongst you.” (Both reported by *Muslim*).

(4) *Jihâd* in the way of Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious

Jihâd is an obligatory duty continuing till the Day of Resurrection. It is not to be given up on the ground of the absence in any age of a general *imâm*, particularly in this difficult period of the history of Islam. Allah says:

“And wage *jihâd* for the sake of Allah as it ought to be waged for His sake.” (*Sûrat al-Hajj*, 78)

And He says:

“O Prophet, fight the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be tough on them.” (*Sûrat al-Tawbah*, 73).

And the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: **“You all fight the polytheists with your properties and persons and tongues.”** (Reported by *Ahmad*, *‘Abû Dâud* and *Al-Nasâ’î*). And in another *hadîth* it is stated: **“And the apex of his prominence is *jihâd* in the way of Allah.”** (reported by *Al-Tirmidhî*).

‘Allama ‘Abd al-Rahmân ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhâb, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

“It should be said: By which book or by which proof you say that *jihâd* is not incumbent except with an *imâm* who is to be followed? This is a lie about the *dîn* and a deviation from the way of the believers. And the

evidences about the nullity of such saying are too well-known to be mentioned. Of these are the general nature of the command to wage *jihâd*, the encouragement about it and the threat of punishments for those who abandon it.” (*Al-Durar al-Sunniyyah*, Vol. 7, p. 97).

(5) The Etiquette of Disagreeing

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

"The correct position is what the leading scholars of the *'ummah* adopt, namely, that *ijtihad* regarding matters about which there is no evidence requiring action in a certain and clear manner, such as an authentic *hadith* which is not contradicted by a similarly authentic *hadith*, is permissible, because of the absence of any evidence on the points at issue or because of the contradictory or obscure nature of the evidences regarding them. And the saying of the scholar that this issue is absolute or certain and that no *ijtihad* is permissible about it is not an invective against anyone who opposes it, nor an imputation to him of having intentionally adopted a view contrary to the correct one." (*'Alâm al-Muwaqqâ'in*, vol. 3, p. 360).

Those who differ in their views about such matters are to discuss these in the spirit of consultation and advice without attacking the dissident, and it is not permissible to be fanatic and to incite hatred and division on account of these differences.

This is in addition to the fact that a *mujtahid* committing error in intellectual issues according to the rules governing that, is excusable, *inshâ'Allah*, as in matters of practising. The religion of Islam consists of knowledge (*'ilm*) and deed (*'amal*); and deed is

the purpose and objective of knowledge. Allah, *Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ*, says:

"Indeed there do dread Allah those of His servants that have knowledge." (*Sûrat Fâtir*, 28).

Knowledge is the basis and foundation of deed. And perhaps at times the one who errs in deed (*'amal*) is worse in sin than the one who errs in knowledge. And perhaps at times the *mujtahid* who errs in some intellectual matters does have to his credit good deeds of the types of worship, *jihâd* and dissemination of knowledge by which he surpasses the one who does not commit an error like that of his but does not have to his credit the like of the former's deed and *jihâd*. And on this consideration scholars praise Imâm al-Nawawî, Ibn Daqîq al-Îd, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî and others like them. Rather the scholars love them and forbid attacking them. May Allah bestow His mercy on them.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

"Whoever among the Muslims is a *mujtahid* in seeking the truth and then makes a mistake, Allah *Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* will forgive his mistake, whether it be in theoretical or practical matters. This was the position taken by the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him." (*Al-Masâ'il al-Mâradîniyyah*, p. 66).

If any dissension or disagreement occurs among Muslims wherein the parties follow their self-interests, each party

supporting its leaders, maligning the others, injuring the others' characters, looking down upon them, lying in wait for their mistakes to take revenge and preying on their slips for slandering, it is a bounden duty to effect a reconciliation between them, and if not feasible, to refrain from participating in those disputes and to hold one's tongue from them, to keep oneself above attendance at those circles or listening to what they are involved in of distress and, instead, to turn to learning the Qur'ân and reciting it, repeating the prayers and invocations traditionally handed down, and making use of the time in worshipping, seeking knowledge of the Qur'ân and *sunnah* and understanding of the *dîn*, calling people to it and asking Allah's forgiveness and cure from the trial and dissension.

'Allâma Sa'dî, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

"Striving and inviting to unify the Muslims and to effect reconciliation between them is the best of all deeds. It is better than occupying time in fasting and prayers; and it is the greatest and the most glorious of *jihâd* in the way of Allah. It is incumbent upon the Muslims not to allow the differences between them in their views and systems of government and politics to be a bar to their religious brotherhood and their bond of faith. Rather all the differences and petty objectives should be subordinated to this great principle." (*Al-Siyâsah al-Shar'iyyah*, p. 13).

(6) Lawful Abandonment

Abandonment is a means of reform which is subject to the rules of benefit and harm. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

"This rule of abandonment differs in accordance with the difference in the strength and weakness and the greatness or smallness of the number of those who abandon. For the object of it is to restrain and discipline the one abandoned and to prevent the generality from being like him. Hence if the benefits in it are predominant to weaken and lessen the harm it is permissible; but if neither the one abandoned nor anyone else is prevented thereby and it rather increases the harm, and the abandoning one is so weak that the harm of it overweighs the benefits, abandonment will not be permissible. Rather the appeasement of some persons will be more beneficial than abandonment." (*Al-Fatâwâ*, Vol. 18, p. 206).

He further says:

"This is like what is made lawful in respect of the enemy – to fight at times and to make peace at times and to take *jizya* at times – all according to situation and advantages. And the response of the scholars like Ahmad and others in this matter is based on this principle." (Ibid.)

The innovator (*mubtadi'*) who does not reach the degree of unbelief by his innovation, taking him out of the *dîn*, he is to be abandoned according the legal rules. Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"If there is in the person a combination of good and evil, of wickedness and obedience, of *sunnah* and *bid'ah*, he deserves friendliness and merit according to the degree of good in him, and he deserves enmity and punishment according to the evil in him. So he should be given a mixture of this and that, just like the case of an indigent thief – his hand should be chopped and he should be given from the *hayt al-mâl* what meets his needs. This is the principle which is agreed on by the '*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*, whereas the *Khawârij*, the *Mu'tazilah* and those who are of their opinion oppose it. (*Al-Fatâwâ*, Vol. 28, p. 209).

And there is a distinction between the deed and the doer of it, be it unbelief or innovation. So the performance of it by a Muslim will not necessitate pronouncing him an infidel (*kâfir*) or an innovator (*mubtadi'*) unless the conditions of the pronouncement and the absence of objections to it are combined in his case.

Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyyah) says:

"It is not necessary if a statement is *kufr* that everyone who utters it out of ignorance or misinterpretation be pronounced a *kâfir*; for the affixing of *kufr* in respect of a particular person is like the affixing of punishment in

respect of him in the hereafter; and for that there are conditions and objections as we have explained elsewhere. So if they are not unbelievers, they are not hypocrites; so they are believers. So forgiveness should be sought for them mercy should be invoked for them. And when the believer says: "Our Lord, forgive us and forgive our brethren who have preceded us in belief" (*Sûrat al-Hashr*, 10), everyone of the foregone generations of the '*ummah* who has preceded with belief is intended thereby; and if he did make a mistake in interpretation and contravened the *sunnah* or committed a sin, he is nonetheless among his brethren who preceded in belief and is to be included in the general body, even if he is one of the seventy two sects; for no sect is there but that among them are a great many who are not unbelievers but believers with error and sin for which they deserve punishment as the sinners from among believers do deserve it; and the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, did not exclude them from the fold of Islam but placed them within his '*ummah*, nor did he say that they shall for ever be in hell. So this is a great principle which should be complied with." (*Minhâj al-Sunnah*, Vol. 5, p. 241).

(7) *Da'wah* and the State of the 'Ummah

Today the Muslims are exposed to a ferocious onslaught made by their enemies from the Jews, the Christians, the atheists, the secularists and others; and various types and shades of unbelief and atheism are sweeping over the lands of Islam; and so many blasts of passion and corruption are carrying them away that they cannot be enumerated except by the Lord of men. This onslaught aims at establishing control over the world of Islam, dividing it, conquering it culturally and morally and distorting the shape of its adherence to the true *dîn*. It is supported by a colossal global plot and unlimited material resources. As a result it has become one of the priorities of Islamic *da'wah* to break this onslaught and to resist it by all possible and legitimate means.

Among these means is to organize and encourage the *da'wah* activity, provided that it should not be based on affections and partisanship for individuals and an undertaking for loyalty and allegiance to it, and to encourage charitable *da'wah* foundations and Islamic societies that resist such onslaught and do not carry the flag of any misguided sect calling and carrying people towards it, together with doing the duty of giving sincere advice with wisdom and good exhortation to such of these groups as goes against the Qur'ân and the *sunnah*.

And the correct and balanced view about these groups is that they are not devoid of right and wrong and good and bad. Some of them are greater and closer to what is right than the others. So it is

necessary to thank it for what it does of good and to encourage it in its work, and to give them sincere advice in respect of what is faulty with it and to forbid it from that.

And cooperation between them all in the charitable projects that benefit the Muslims in general is legitimate and praiseworthy in all that conforms to the Qur'ân and the *sunnah*. His Eminence the *Muftî*-General Shaykh 'Abd 'Azîz ibn Baz says:

"If any *jamâ'ah* err in any matter of the *dîn* which concerns *'aqidah* (article of faith) or that which Allah made incumbent or has made unlawful, they are to be informed by means of legal proofs with courtesy, wisdom and good manners. This is the duty of the adherents of Islam that they cooperate in piety and righteousness, that they give one another sincere advice and that they do not forsake one another so that the enemies might be ambitious about them." (*Al-Islâh* [magazine], 27 Dhû al-Hijjah, 1413)

And as regards political activity, such as entering the Assembly of Representatives (Parliament), if the object is to effect reform and to prevent the worse of two evils, with the greater probability of obtaining lawful advantage, it is a question of *ijtihâd* in which differences of opinion are permissible.

The fundamental thing with regard to the means of *da'wah* introduced in this age is that they are legitimate as long as they do not contravene the guidelines and objects of the *shari'ah*.

To know the state of the Muslims and the schemes of their enemies, and to expose them and repulse them, in accordance with the rules of *shari'ah*, by writings, speeches and in other ways, constitute an obligatory duty of the community (*fard 'alâ al-kifâyah*); and whoever devotes himself to that duty is to be thanked and rewarded. It is in the nature of *jihâd*. So whoever undertakes it, he is fighting on one of the fronts of the Muslims.

(8) Respect for the Honour of A Muslim

The unlawfulness of maligning a Muslim is a great principle of the Islamic *shari'ah*; and to be on guard against attacking the reputation of the Muslims, specially of the scholars and the preachers, is the right way. Classifying people and hurling false accusations against them is an extensive scourge and an erroneous distress. The fundamental principle is that the state of a Muslim is inviolate and secure which should not be transgressed except on proven ground. To test his apparent immunity from *bid'ah* and sin by poking into what is within him is itself a *bid'ah*. Allah says:

"Those who give trouble to the believing men and the believing women for what they have not earned do indeed burden themselves with a calumny and a conspicuous sin." (*Sûrat al-'Ahzâb*, 58).

And He says:

"And do not spy on one another, nor shall one of you backbite the other." (*Sûrat al-Hujurât*, 12).

And the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, says: **"The loftiest of elevation is the honour of a Muslim."** (Reported by *Al-Hâkim*). He also says: **"Reviling a Muslim is an outrageous sin and fighting him is unbelief (*kuf'r*)."** (Agreed upon by *Bukhârî* and *Muslim*).

A Muslim must be on a very high level of character and must have lofty mentality. His preoccupation must not be to spread

abroad reports and rumours in all directions, nor to publicise the statement of his opponents without scrutiny, consideration, discernment and judiciousness, thereby carrying it to the worst possible implication and thus enkindling dissension and discord. Allah the Most High says:

“O you who believe, if an ungodly person (*fāsiq*) comes to you with a news, ascertain the fact, lest you should hit a people without knowledge and then become repentant of what you have done.” (*Sûrat al-Hujurât*, 6).

Allah further says:

“When you received it [the calumny] with your tongues and were uttering with your mouths that which you had no knowledge of and were considering it insignificant; but it is to Allah very grave.” (*Sûrat al-Nûr*, 15).

And the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, says: **“As to the causing of dissension, that is the stripper.”** (Reported by *Ahmad*, *‘Abû Dâud* and *Tirmidhî*).

And it is the duty of a Muslim to observe equity and impartiality. So he should not refuse to recognize the merit of any person; and if he commits a sin he should not rejoice at it and should not use such accidental incidents as reasons for disparagement and defamation, and for alienating the people from such a person whose predominant characteristic is good and right. The principle of the *‘Ahl al-Sunnah* is that if a person's rightness is greater than his errors, his errors are to be given over to his

rightness. This does not mean prohibit clarifying his mistake and cautioning against it with courtesy and refraining from imitating him in that mistake. Allah says:

“Let not the detestation for a people impel you to not doing justice. Do justice; it is the closest to righteousness; and beware of Allah. Verily Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” (*Sûrat al-Mâ'idah*, 8).

And Allah says:

“And not underpay people in their things.” (*Sûrat al-'A'râf*, 85).

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah bestow His mercy on him, says:

“A great person who has right standing in Islam, well versed in it and with influence and position, may be in error and lapse but he is to be excused; rather he is to be rewarded for his *ijtihâd*. It is not permissible to follow him in that error, nor is it permissible to divest him of his status, leadership and position in the hearts of Muslims.” (*‘Ilâm al-Muwaqqa'in*, Vol. III, p. 283).

And Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah bestow is mercy on him, says:

“If it happens that a scholar who is profuse in giving *fatâwâ* (legal opinions) and he pronounces *fatâwâ* on a number of questions in disagreement with the authentic *sunnah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, and in contrast with what the rightly guided

Khalîfahs were on, it will not be permissible to bar him absolutely from giving *fatwâ*; but it should be clarified to him in which ways he has diverged from the *sunnah*; for in every era since the ages of the Companions and the *Tâbi'ûn* there have been scholars who have been like that." (*Al-Fatâwâ*, Vol. 27, p. 311).

(9) Honouring the '*Ulamâ*' (Scholars)

Honouring the '*ulamâ*' and the leaders of *da'wah*, praying for them, defending them and refuting their detractors are some of the noblest duties towards them in return for what they have rendered and are rendering of the great services in the cause of Islam and the Muslims. This is the etiquette which the predecessors (*salaf*) of this '*ummah*' followed. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, says: **"He belongs not to us who does not show respect to our seniors and mercy to our young ones and does not know the right of our '*âlim* (scholar)."** (Reported by *Ahmad* and *Al-Hâkim*).

(10) The Manner of Seeking Knowledge

The right way of seeking knowledge is that a student should start by learning 'aqidah (articles of the faith), namely *tawhid* and the essence of the creed of the 'Ahl al-Sunnah from the books of the predecessors like *Al-Wasitiyah* and all that is incumbent on him to know and to do of the obligations pertaining to his specific time.

In addition to that he should learn the art of reciting the noble Qur'an and reading it correctly. He should begin to memorize it and should study *hadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) from the books of *Sunnah* like the two authentic collections (*Bukhari* and *Muslim*). He should also accustom himself to practice what he learns and to look into his drawbacks and rectify them.

The adolescent should be brought up on correcting intentions and doing a deed with heart and soul. Adherence to the *sunnah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, should be endeared to him and an eye should be kept on the manner of his using his tongue and his good manners which should be instilled in him.

He should then make progress in every branch of knowledge, mastering its principles and fundamentals and then entering into its details one by one. He should learn gradually and should not make haste, rushing into the matters of controversy before mastering the fundamentals of the sciences.

And it is the duty of the student to make sure about his intention and aims and should adorn himself with modesty, good manners and gentleness. He should value time, obtain useful books, devote himself to reading and studying, and choose good companionship that will help him in all that.

As for teaching the beginners the art of criticism and modification (*al-jarh wa al-ta'dil*), and encouraging them to criticise the 'ulamâ' and the books to start with, and to make them enter into controversial matters before their mastering what is essential for them to know and do, and wasting their time in following up the mistakes of others at the beginning of the road, it is sabotaging knowledge and a breach of the trust of teaching.

These are some of the principles we consider important by way of reminding ourselves and our Muslim brethren thereof. We did not spare any effort, according to our ability and capacity, to explain them as an act of good faith for the sake of Allah, His Messenger, the leaders of the Muslims and the Muslims in general. This is all, and we seek refuge with Allah against going astray or leading astray, making mistake or causing the making of mistake, doing injustice or being done injustice, and ignoring or being ignored. And our final word is that all the praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all beings.

(Issued in Kuwait on 26 Rabî' al-'Awwal 1415 H. (3/9/1994))

Signatories to the Statement

- * Muhammad 'Abd Allah al-Hâjrî
- * Hâkim al-Mutayrî
- * Jâsim al-Fihayd al-Dawsarî
- * 'Abd al- Hâdî Hamad al-Murri
- * 'Awwâd al-'Anzî
- * Nâsir ibn Lâzim
- * Bassâm al-Shattî
- * Ahmad 'Abd Allah 'Abd al-Rahîm
- * Muhammad al-Kandrî
- * Riyâd Mansûr al-Khulayfî
- * Faysal 'Abd Allah al-'Alî
- * Âdil ibn Jâsim al-Damkhî
- * Sa'id 'Abd Allah
- * 'Abd Allah ibn Mubâar al-Haqqân
- * Fahd al-Shuwayb
- * Dâwd al-'As'ûsî
- * Walîd ibn Khâlid al-Rabî'

- * Khâlid al-Kharrâz
- * Khâlid Shujâ' al-'Utaybî
- * Jâsim Muhammad al-'Înâtî
- * 'Abd al-'Azîs al-Hadah
- * Muhammad al-Hamûd al-Najdî
- * Nâzim Sultân al-Misbâh
- * 'Abd al-Razzâq Khalîfah al-Shâyijî
- * Walî Musâ'id al-Tabatbâ'î
- * Zayd Marzûq al-Wasîs
- * Sâlih ibn Fâlih al-Nâmî
- * 'Abd al-Ra'ûf al-Kamâlî
- * Hâmid ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Alî
- * Hamûd ibn Muhammad al-Hamdân Ahmad ibn Sabâh
- * Sa'd ibn Muhammad al-Bunnâq
- * Hây Sâlim al-Hây